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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 3 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March 1998, I have the honour to transmit herewith a note verbale regarding several events to be held in Jerusalem, as part of "Israel's fiftieth anniversary" celebrations, under the pretext of "united Jerusalem" being "Israel's capital". The Group of Arab States considers these events a violation of all relevant resolutions of the United Nations regarding Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 37 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mikhail WEHBE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Syrian Arab Republic to
the United Nations

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ANNEX

Note verbale dated 3 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March 1998, would like to bring the following information to your attention. As part of its fiftieth anniversary celebrations, Israel is holding several events in Jerusalem, under the pretext of it being "Israel's capital". These Jerusalem events are to be sponsored by state organs as well as by the Jerusalem municipality, which has extended invitations to mayors and dignitaries from all over the world to participate in these Jerusalem events.

These planned celebrations in Jerusalem constitute a gross violation of international law, numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the principle and spirit of the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Security Council, in its resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, censures in the strongest terms the enactment by Israel of the "basic law" on Jerusalem, states, inter alia, that it constitutes a violation of international law and calls upon those States that have established diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City. Furthermore, the Security Council has, in 25 resolutions, affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War of 1949 to all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem. It has also repeatedly declared that all Israeli measures, including the legislative and administrative ones, taken to change the status, demographic composition or character of Jerusalem, are null and void.

After the Israeli occupation in 1967, Israel illegally extended the borders of Jerusalem to 10 times the original area, dissolved the Arab municipality and extended Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration to East Jerusalem.

While these planned events in Jerusalem blatantly violate international law and the will of the international community, as expressed in countless United Nations resolutions, they also constitute violations of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993, which states that the status of Jerusalem is to be negotiated in the permanent status talks, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). These resolutions consider East Jerusalem to be an occupied territory, not the "capital of Israel". Such events and invitations, by claiming Jerusalem to be the "capital of Israel" aim to predetermine the status of the city.

We urge all Member States to bring these facts to the attention of their respective authorities. By participating in such events, the international community would be signalling its acceptance of these illegal Israeli actions. Instead, the international community must demonstrate its resounding objection to these measures and to Israel's continuing defiance of the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions and international law.